

Every partnership has its ups and downs, and every relationship ebbs and flows. Sometimes you feel closer - other times you are more distant.

If it seems like you and your partner are living separate lives in the same house, or if you just want to revitalise your relationship and develop more intimacy, it is possible. It just requires a little thought, time and attention.



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How to reconnect with your partner

* Step 1

Think about the last time you felt truly close to your partner. Consider how long ago that was, what the two of you were doing, and what kinds of stressful events or hectic schedules have transpired since. The more distant that time was, the more urgently you need to refocus on your relationship and reconnect.

* Step 2

Really try to understand what it's been like for your partner in the past days, weeks or even months since you last felt that closeness. Your partner may have been working long hours or stressing about finances, may have recently returned from deployment, or lost a job. Perhaps your partner feels overworked at home or is getting burnt out with the kids and their activities. Has he/she experienced a death in the family, or been overwhelmed by the stresses of life? Withdrawal from you may have been a natural coping reaction - particularly if your partner feels you don't understand. Consider how you might feel if the roles were reversed and how much you would appreciate your partner's support and encouragement. Really listen when your partner needs to vent. Make it a point to start giving your partner that encouragement right now and every day. It may take a while for your partner to reciprocate, but your efforts won't be in vain.

* Step 3

Do something together. Think about what you were doing with your partner the last time you felt truly close. Schedule a time to do that same thing again. Think about the activities you know your partner enjoys and make it a point to do some of those things. Take time to play together!

* Step 4

Get away from the grind. Go out on a date night, take a day off to be with each other, plan a weekend getaway or holiday together. Often, time spent together away from all the stress and pressures of everyday living is the perfect prescription for recapturing marital/partnership bliss and intimacy. Schedule date nights if necessary to make sure you have couple time together regularly.

* Step 5

Learn your partner's love language. Do some research to find materials or read some books that may easily help you determine your partner's primary 'love language', or ways your partner feels most loved. Commit to showing your partner love in a way that is most meaningful to him or her, regardless of your own personal preferences.

* Step 6

Kiss. Hug. Make love. Have sex. Whatever you want to call it, when one or both partners is stressed out or out of sorts, sex is often the first thing to go. Both of you are tired and sleep seems like a more immediate need. Unfortunately, days can stretch into weeks without that physical intimacy. Most couples really do need the physical expression of love and the closeness that a good romp in the hay engenders.

* Step 7

Recommit to your partner. Reaffirm your love, devotion and commitment to love your partner through the good times and the bad. Do it in your heart and then put it into words and tell your partner. You can never tell someone you love him or her too much.